

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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P 062225 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3690

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 1210

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CS

SUBJECT: TREJOS ESCALANTE WITHDRAWS

### SUMMARY

TREJOS ESCALANTE CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE ON APRIL 5 TO ANNOUNCE HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OPPOSITION PRIMARY RACE. THE UNIFICACION NACIONAL ( UN), TREJOS' PARTY, SIMULTANEOUSLY RELEASED A LIST OF REASONS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL, MOST OF THEM FAULTING MARIO ECHANDI FOR HIS RECENT SPEECH ATTACKING TREJOS WHICH THEY SAY HAS RENDERED IMPOSSIBLE A HARMONIOUS CAMPAIGN BETWEEN THE TWO OPPOSITION CONTENDERS, TREJOS AND JORGE GONZALEZ OARTEN. THE REAL REASON FOR THE WITHDRAWAL WAS, HOWEVER, A SEVERE FINANCIAL SQUEEZE ON THE UN ( SEE COMMENT). END SUMMARY

1. FERNAMDO TREJOS ESCALANTE, UN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DECIDED APRIL 5 TO TAKE HIMSELF AND THE UN OUT OF THE PRIMARY RACE AGAINST JORGE GONZALEZ MARTEN, THE PARTIDO NACIONAL INDEPENDIENTE ( PNI) CANDIDATE. TREJOS ESCALANTE HELD A LATE EVENING PRESS CONFERENCE WHERE HE ANNOUNCED THAT BECAUSE OF " INSUFFICIENT HARMONY" NOW BETWEEN THE TWO CONTENDING PARTIES, THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT UNITY AFTER THE PRIMARY. TREJOS SAID EX- PRESIDENT MARIO ECHANDI' S SPEECH LAST SATURDAY, APRIL 1, WHEN ECHANDI BITTERLY DENOUNCED TREJOS AS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR FIGUERES' VICTORY OVER ECHANDI IN 1970, PROVED THAT NO HARMONY EXISTS.

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2. IN A 16 POINT STATEMENT BY THE UN' S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RELEASED AT TTREJOS' PRESS CONFERENCE, THE PARTY EXPLAINED ITS POSITION AND JUSTIFICATION FOR WITHDRAWAL. THE ESSENCE OF THE DECLARATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

3. IT ARGUES AT LENGTH THAT ONLY THE UN, AS THE COSTA RICAN MAJORITY PARTY, IS SUFFICIENTLY POWERFUL TO DEFEAT THE PARTIDO LIBERACION NACIONAL ( PLN) IN FEBRUARY, 1974. THE UN, IT SAYS, HAD GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS IN ITS OWN PARTY PRIMARY ON DECEMBER 3 TO ENCOURAGE WIDE POPULAR PARTICIPATION. THE STATEMENT EXPLAINS THAT EVEN AFTER THE UN PARTY PRIMARY WHERE A CANDIDATE WAS SUCCESSFULLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY CHOSE, THE UN CONTINUED TO BE DISPOSED TO TALK FURTHER WITH OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS IN ORDER TO INCREASE AN INEVITABLE MARGIN OF VICTORY OVER THE PLN IN FEBRUARY, 1974. THE UN' S OBJECTIVE, IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, IT GOES ON, WAS TO UNITE THE OPPOSITION AND NOT TO SEPARATE IT FURTHER. THIS THINKING WAS BEHIND THE AGREEMENT TO HAVE ANOTHER PRIMARY ELECTION ON MAY 20. HOWEVER, THE STATEMENT SAYS, SHORTLY AFTER THE AGREEMENT ON UNITY HAD BEEN CONCLUDED, THE SAME PERSONS WHO HAD SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF UNITY REFUSED TO RATIFY THE AGREED UPON UNITY PACT. MOREOVER, SOME OF THOSE VOICES WHICH SPOKE SO POSITIVELY FOR UNITY HAVE NOW TURNED TO SUCH A CAMPAIGN OF " INSULT, CALUMNY , AND DEPRECIATION" THAT COMMON OPPOSITION SUPPORT BY THE MAY 20 LOSER TO THE VICTOR IS IN QUESTION.

4. THE STATEMENT COMPARES THE UN' S HIGH- TONED CAMPAIGN CAMPANA DE ALTURA) WITH THE ECHANDI CAMPAIGN, IN BEHALF OF JORGE GONZALEZ MARTEN, THAT " BRIMS WITH FALSE EPITHETS AIMED AT LEADERS OF OUR POLITICAL GROUP IN AN EFFORT TO EXONERATE HIS ( ECHANDI' S) OWN NOTORIOUS POLITICAL LIABILITY." THE STATEMENT WINDS UP DECLARING THAT AN INTERNAL PRIMARY FIGHT ( IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES) WILL ONLY FAVOR THE PLN AND ITS CANDIDATE DANIEL ODUBER.

5. COMMENT: THE REASON THE UN HAS WITHDRAWN FROM THE PRIMARY IS, IN FACT, LARGELY FINANCIAL. THE UN HAS HARD INFORMATION THAT JORGE GONZALEZ MARTEN RETURNED FROM MEXICO CITY TWO WEEKS AGO WITH \$625,000 WHICH HE DEPOSITED IN ONE CHECK IN THE BANCO NACIONAL. THE UN' S EARLIER CAMPAIGN

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STRATEGY WAS BASED ON ITS CONVICTION THAT GONZALEZ MARTEN HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN ATTEMPTS TO GAIN FINANCING AND WOULD NOT BE ABLE, THEREFORE, TO RUN A WELL FINANCED CAMPAIGN.

6. UN POLITICAL LEADERS REMAIN CONVINCED THAT TREJOS ESCALANTE COULD BEAT GONZALEZ MARTEN ON MAY 20, BUT NOW ONLY AFTER SPENDING CONSIDERABLY MORE MONEY THAN THEY EXPECTED TO SPEND. TREJOS HIMSELF APPARENTLY WAS AMONG THE LAST TO ACCEPT THE UN POLITICAL COMMISSIONS' ALMOST UNANIMOUS DECISION TO WITHDRAW. THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM FOR THE UN IS TO GET THE EXPLANATION OUT TO ITS GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS TO HEAD OFF RUMORS THAT TREJOS WITHDREW BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID OF LOSING. AN INTENSIVE PRESS AND RADIO CAMPAIGN WILL BE UNDERTAKEN OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO EXPLAIN THE WITHDRAWAL IN THE TERMS OF THE DECLARATION.

7. WITH REGARD TO THE LONGER TERM, UN LEADERS EXPECT THAT A FOUR- WAY PRESIDENTIAL RACE IS NOW INEVITABLE BETWEEN JORGE GONZALEZ MARTEN, RODRIGO CARAZO, ( PARTIDO RENOVACION DEMOCRATICA, THE PLN AND UN. UN LEADERS ADMIT THAT THE POSSIBLE RESULT WILL BE THAT NO CANDIDATE WILL RECEIVE THE NECESSARY 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN FEBRUARY, 1974, AND A RUNOFF ELECTION BETWEEN THE FIRST TWO CANDIDATES WILL THUS BE REQUIRED.  
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